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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05
CIAE-00 SP-02 L-01 PRS-01 SSO-00 EB-03 INRE-00 /038 W
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O 281455Z JAN 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4109
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 GEORGETOWN 0209

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: GY, PGOV
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ON
US-GUYANESE RELATIONS

REF: GEORGETOWN 0192

SUMMARY: IN CORDIAL MEETING JANUARY 26 FON
MIN WILLS EXPRESSED HIS STRONG DESIRE TO
OPEN DIALOGUE TO IMPROVE US-GUYANESE RELATIONS.
HE ASKED FOR MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE IN
FEBRUARY. I STRESSED THAT IT WAS US HOPE ALSO TO
RESTORE NORMAL RELATIONS BUT THAT IMPROVEMENT
WOULD REQUIRE CESSATION OF UNWARRANTED DESTABILI-
ZATION TALK. WILLS CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT BURNHAM
HAD SUFFERED A MILD HEART ATTACK (DETAILS REPORTED
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REFTEL). WILLS TRIED TO BE REASSURING OVER
GUYANA'S RELATIONS WITH COMECON AND CUBA, BUT AT
TIMES HIS OWN CONCERN SHOWED THROUGH. HE PERSON-
ALLY SEEMS TO BE A PRIME MOVER BEHIND GOG EFFORTS
TO OBTAIN FUNDS FROM OPEC AND NON-ALIGNED
SOURCES (VENEZUELA, NIGERIA, LIBYA). GUYANA, HE
SAID, WILL BE FACING A SEVERE LIQUIDITY CRISIS

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SOON. DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY HE REVEALED THAT SUSPICIONS OF US REMAIN HIGH IN GOG AND PARTY CIRCLES. END SUMMARY.

1. US-GOG RELATIONS: ACCOMPANIED BY MCCOY I VISITED WILLS FOR A HURRIED MEETING OF ABOUT 30 MINUTES DURING MORNING OF JANUARY 26. WILLS HAD REQUESTED THE MEETING IN ORDER THAT WE COULD MEET BEFORE HE DEPARTED FOR CUBA AT NOON. WILLS WELCOMED ME BACK WARMLY. I INFORMED HIM THAT I HAD RETURNED TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH GUYANA. WILLS STATED HE HAD THE SAME OBJECTIVES AND THAT MY RETURN WAS THE FIRST STEP. HE WANTED TO BEGIN A NEW DIALOGUE WITH THE UNITED STATES TO PREVENT MISUNDERSTANDINGS FROM ESCALATING.

2. WILLS THEN STATED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT HE MEET WITH SECRETARY VANCE AS EARLY AS NEXT MONTH. HE HAD INSTRUCTIED AMBASSADOR MANN UPON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON TO SEEK AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE SECRETARY WITH THIS IN MIND. NOW, HE SAID, HE WAS MAKING THE REQUEST THROUGH ME ALSO. HE PREFERRED THE MEETING BE INFORMAL AND WAS PREPARED TO GO TO US AT SECRETARY'S CONVENIENCE WHEN SUITABLE DATE COULD BE ARRANGED. HE WOULD PREFER LITTLE OR NOT PUBLICITY. WILLS STATED THAT HE WANTED GET TO KNOW THE SECRETARY AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT WILL BE TO THE MUTUAL ADVANTAGE OF BOTH
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PARTIES. I SAID I WOULD PASS HIS MESSAGE TO THE DEPARTMENT.

3. I POINTED OUT THAT THE PROCESS OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WOULD REQUIRE POSITIVE ACTIONS AND GESTURES BY BOTH PARTIES. NO MATTER WHAT HE OR OTHER GUYANESE OFFICIALS SAY TO US PRIVATELY, THEY COULD EXPECT THE UNITED STATES IN THE FUTURE TO REACT ADVERSELY TO UNSUBSTANTIATED CHARGES, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, OF DESTABILIZATION AND TO CHARACTERIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES AS A CAPITALIST ENEMY.

4. WILLS SIGHED AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD. HE CLAIMED ONE OF HIS HARDEST JOBS IS TRYING TO CONTROL STATEMENTS BY OTHER OFFICIALS HERE THAT AFFECT FOREIGN POLICY. HE INDICATED THAT HE IS ATTEMPTING TO BRING SUCH ACTIVITY UNDER MFA OR HAVE STATEMENTS CLEARED IN ADVANCE.

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5. WILLS THE COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT THE US
HAD OVER-REACTED TO BURNHAM'S OCTOBER 17 SPEECH.
THE POPULAR REACTION TO THE CRASH HAD BEEN STRONG
AND BURNHAM HAD TO REPORT ON IT. BEING A LAWYER
HE HAD LINED UP THE FACTS. I RETORTED THAT ONE
COULD NOT BUT CONSTRUE THE PM'S WORDS TO HAVE BEEN
ANYTHING BUT AN ACCUSTION. WILLS THEN
ADMITTED THAT EVEN BURNHAM REALIZED AFTERWARDS THAT
HE HAD GONE TOO FAR. I SAID THAT BURNHAM'S SPEECH
WAS ONLY THE MOST SERIOUS OF A STRING OF STATEMENTS,
INCLUDING SOME WILLS HAD MADE, WHICH INDIRECTLY IF
NOT DIRECTLY ACCUSED THE US OF DESTABILIZING GUYANA.
THE US HAD NOT ENGAGED IN SUCH ACTIVITY AND
FOUND THE STATEMENTS UNACCEPTABLE.

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LIMDIS

6. WILLS RESPONDED DEFENSIVELY, SAYING BURNHAM'S
PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION WAS FROM THE LEFT AND THAT FOR
ACTIVE POLITICAL SUPPORT THE YOUTH HAD TO BE
MOBILIZED. THE COUNTRY WAS DIVIDED POLITICALLY
AND CULTURALLY, AND THEREFORE A "CONSCIOUS VILLAIN"
WAS OCCASTIONALLY NEEDED IN THE EFFORT TO CREATE
NATIONAL UNITY. THE HISTORY OF US INTERVENTION,

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ITS DOMINANCE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND THE
VERY REAL SUSPICIONS THAT SOME PEOPLE HARBOR OF
THE US, MADE IT THE TARGET OF CRITICISM.

7 I RESPONDED THAT I UNDERSTOOD THE POLITICAL
CONDITIONS HE DESCRIBED, BUT IF GUYANA FOUND THE
UNITED STATES MORE USEFUL AS A PUBLIC ENEMY THEN
AS A FRIEND AND ENGAGED IN UNSUBSTANTIATED ACCUSA-
TIONS, HIS EFFORTS AND MINE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS
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WOULD BE FUTILE. I RECOGNIZED THAT DIFFERENCES IN
APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS WERE INEVITABLE. OUR NATIONAL
INTERESTS WOULD DIFFER AND WE WOULD MAKE REPRESENTA-
TIONS WHEN SOMETHING GZHANA WAS DOING AFFECTED US
INTERESTS. BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT WE
SHOULD ENGAGE IN PUBLIC CRITICISM. AS FOR THE
PAST, IT WAS BEHIND US. I HOPED WE COULD GET THINGS
BACK ON THE TRACK.

8. WILLS AGREED AND SAID HE THOUGHT AN OPPORTUNITY
TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WAS AT HAND. HE STRESSED THAT
THE US SHOULD NOT BE CONCERNED THAT GUYANA WILL
EVER BE A THREAT BECAUSE OF ITS FOREIGN CONNECTIONS.
INTERNALLY, HE CONSIDERED GUYANESE POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT COULD BEST BE CHARACTERIZED AS A FORM
OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM. PRIVATE INVESTMENT WOULD
MEAN FOREIGN INVESTMENT BECAUSE GUYANA DOESNOT
HAVE NATIVE ENTREPRENUERS WHO COULD DEVELOP A
DYNAMIC PRIVATE ENTERPRISE HERE. THE THRUST FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THEREFORE MUST BE PROVIDED
THROUGH SOME FORM OF SOCIALISM.

9. GOG-COMECON ASSOCIATION: WILLS INSISTED THAT
GUYANA'S REQUEST FOR ASSOCIATION WITH COMECON WAS
MOTIVATED BY GUYANA'S NEED FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
AND PROVIDED WINDOW DRESSING TO SATISFY THE PNC
RADICALS AND COUNTER THE OPPOSITION PPP. HE
PERSONALLY EXPECTED LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE TO COME FROM THE RELATIONSHIP. THE
SOVIETS, HE SPECULATED, COULD NOT AFFORD ANOTHER
CUBA. MOREOVER HE AND SOME OTHERS IN THE GOG WERE
CONCERNED THAT POLITICAL STRINGS WOULD BE ATTACHED
TO COMECON AID. HE LIKENED GUYANA'S POSITION
IN THE WESTERN WORLD TO BE SIMILAR TO THAT OF
POLAND IN THE EAST. POLAND'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT
IT WOULD ENCOURAGE LIMITED PRIVATE ENTERPRISE DID
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NOT MEAN IT COULD JOIN A RIVAL POWER-BLOC.
SIMILARLY GUYANA WOULD NOT JOIN THE SOVIET BLOC
AN ANY STRATEGIC SENSE.

10. WILLS SAID THAT GUYANA'S REAL INTERESTS LIE IN GETTING
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE OPEC AND NON-ALIGNED
COUNTRIES. SUCH HELP WAS NEEDED NOW TO TIDE GUYANA OVER THE
LIQUIDITY CRISIS THAT WILL OCCUR WITHIN THE NEXT
FEW MONTHS. HE HOPED THAT NIGERIA, LIBYA OR
POSSIBLY VENEZUELA COULD HELP. HIS VISIT TO INDIA
WAS POSTPONED UNTIL APRIL DUE TO THE INDIAN ELECTIONS.

11. CUBA TRIP: WILLS SAID HE WOULD DEPART FOR
CUBA AT NOON AND WOULD REMAIN THERE UNTIL FEBRUARY
1 OR 2. HE WOULD DISCUSS VARIOUS ITEMS ON THE
NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AGENDA. HE WOULD MAKE
CLEAR TO THE CUBANS THAT GUYANA WOULD NOT SUPPORT
ANY CUBAN INITIATIVE AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE.
AT THIS POINT HE REITERATED THAT THE PNC WOULD NOT
ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUERTO RICAN
SOCIALIST. I REMARKED THAT WE HAD RECEIVED HIS
MESSAGE ON THIS AND APPRECIATED IT. ANY PNC-PRSP
RELATIONSHIP WOULD CREATE AN IMPEDIMENT TO BETTER-
MENT OF US-GUYANESE RELATIONS.

12. IN CUBA HE WOULD ALSO EXPRESS GOG CONCERN OVER
CUBA'S EFFORTS TO PUSH PERU INTO A WAR WITH CHILE. HE ALSO
WANTED TO DISCUSS SECURITY AND OBTAIN ITELLIGENCE INFORMATION
ON CUBAN EXILE ACTIVITIES. HE HAD REPORTS THAT THE
CHILEAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (DINA) WAS WORKING
CLOSELY WITH CUBAN EXILES.

13. CUBAN EXILES AND CIA: WILLS SAID CUBAN
EXILES CONTINUED TO CONCERN THE GOG, AND THAT MANY
GUYANESE STILL HARBOR THE SUSPICION OF LINKS
BETWEEN THE CIA AND EXILES. WHEN I OBJECTED
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VEHEMENTLY TO THIS ASSERTION, HE QUICKLY REMARKED
"I KNOW, I KNOW, BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT CUBAN
EXILES ARE ATTEMPTING TO DESTABILIZE GUYANA."

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LIMDIS

14. EXILE ACTIVITIES HAVE CREATED A SENSITIVITY
IN GOG-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS ACCORDING TO WILLS.
ALTHOUGH THE GOG HAD BEEN CARFUL NOT TO ACCUSE GOV
OF COLLUSION IN CUBAN EXLE ACTIVITIES, IT IS AWARE
OF THE PROMINENT ROLE EXILES HAVE PLAYED IN
VENEZUELAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE FORCES WILLS
SAID HE BELIEVES CUBAN EXILES HAVE A LARGE
CONTINGENT IN THE VENEZUELAN ARMY DIVISION ON THE
GUYANESE BORDER.

15. COMMENT: WILLS WAS OBVIOUSLY AND
EXPLICITLY RELIEVED TO BEGIN A DIALOGUE WITH
THE UNITED STATES. THE FRIENDLY MOOD DID NOT
APPEAR TO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY MY CANDOR. I
DELIBERATELY CAME DOWN HARD ON HIM CONCERNING
DESTABILIZATION CHARGES. I WANTED TO MAKE CRYSTAL
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CLEAR THAT WE CANNONT EXPECT TO IMPROVE US-GUYANESE
RELATIONS IF GOG OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO THROW
VERBAL DARTS AT THE US. CLEARLY IT IS WILLS'
TASK TO SUBDUE US CONCERNS OVER THE GOG'S DEEPENING
RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA AND COMECON, BUT HIS OWN

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CONCERN OVER THE TREND BECAME APPARENT. WHILE DOMESTIC ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONCERNS APPEAR TO BE THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THIS TREND, AS THE RELATIONSHIPS DEEPEN THEY INEVITABLY DEVELOP A MOMENTUM OF THEIR OWN. THE CUBANS HAVE CAREFULLY CULTIVATED INFLUENCE BY PLAYING ON GUYANESE INSECURITIES AND THE SOVIETS ARE DANGLING THE CARROT OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN FRONT OF AN INCREASINGLY INSOLVENT GUYANA.

16. GUIDANCE REQUESTED: WHEN WILLS RETURNS TO GUYANA HE WILL INQUIRE CONCERNING HIS REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE. I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING GUIDANCE FOR USE IN RESPONDING TO HIM.
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